

Serial No. 09/574,453
Docket No. FJ-2000-004-US
(MAS.001)

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REMARKS

Entry of this Amendment is proper because it does not raise any new issues requiring further search by the Examiner, narrows the issues on appeal, **and is believed to place the present application in condition for immediate allowance.**

Claims 2-11, 13, 14, 16, 17, and 24-31 are all of the claims presently pending in the application.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that **independent claims 11, 14, 16, and 17 are allowed.**

While Applicants believe that all of the claims are patentable over the cited references, **to speed prosecution and to place the present application in condition for immediate allowance,** claims 1, 12, 15, and 18-23 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the filing of a divisional application.

Claims 2-10, 24, 26, 28, and 30 have been amended merely to change their dependency from claim 1 to allowed claim 11. Such is proper because allowed claim 11 includes all of the features of claim 1. Thus, claims 2-10, 24, 26, 28, and 30 should be allowed by virtue of their dependency from allowed claim 11.

Claims 13, 25, 27, 29, and 31 have been amended merely to change their dependency from claim 12 to allowed claim 14. Such is proper because allowed claim 14 includes all of the features of claim 12. Thus, claims 13, 25, 27, 29, and 31 should be allowed by virtue of their dependency from allowed claim 11.

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Accordingly, claims 2-11, 13, 14, 16, 17, and 24-31 (all of the claims presently pending in the application) should now be in condition for immediate allowance.

I. THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 1-10, 12, 13, 15, and 18-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Parulski, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,573,927) in view of Ito, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,453,071).

As mentioned above, while Applicants believe that all of the claims are patentable over the cited references, **to speed prosecution and to place the present application in condition for immediate allowance**, claims 1, 12, 15, and 18-23 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the filing of a divisional application.

Claims 2-10, 24, 26, 28, and 30 have been amended merely to change their dependency from claim 1 to allowed claim 11. Claims 13, 25, 27, 29, and 31 have been amended merely to change their dependency from claim 12 to allowed claim 14.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that this rejection has been rendered moot by the amendments set forth above. Therefore, the Examiner is requested to withdraw this rejection and permit claims 2-11, 13, 14, 16, 17, and 24-31 (all of the claims presently pending in the application) should now be in condition for immediate allowance.

II. CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 2-11, 13, 14, 16, 17, and 24-31, all of the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the

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prior art of record and are in condition for immediate allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

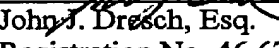
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John J. Dresch, Esq.
Registration No. 46,672
Sean M. McGinn, Esq.
Registration No. 34,386

**MCGINN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
LAW GROUP, PLLC**
8321 Old Courthouse Road, Suite 200
Vienna, Virginia 22182-3817
(703) 761-4100
Customer No. 21254

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION

I certify that I transmitted via facsimile to (571) 273-8300 the enclosed Supplemental Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 and Statement of the Substance of the Interviews to Examiner Thierry L. Pham, Art Unit 2624, on September 19, 2005.


John J. Dresch, Esq.
Registration No. 46,672